

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2317

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, PINS, GR, TU,

SUBJECT: RECENT INCIDENTS INVOLVING MUSLIMS IN THRACE

REF: THESSALONIKI 238 AND 233

1) FOLLOWING LOCAL ITEMS REFLECTING APPARENT CONTINUING TENSIONS BETWEEN GREEK AND TURKISH COMMUNITIES IN THRACE HAVE APPEARED IN THESSALONIKI PRESS OVER PAST FEW DAYS.

2) "MAKEDONIA" OF APRIL 16 CARRIES REPORT FROM ALEXANDROUPOLIS ON MEETING APRIL 14 OF JOINT GREEK-TURKISH BORDER COMMISSION TO DISCUSS RECENT "EPISODES" INVOLVING GREEK TRAINS AT BORDER. WHILE NATURE OF INCIDENTS NOT SPECIFIED, REPORTNOTES THAT IN PAST GREEK TRAINS HAVE BEEN STONED BY TURKS AT BORDER. (NOTE: INCIDENTS PROBABLY OCCURRED AT KARAGATS WHERE GREEK RAIL LINK BETWEEN ALEXANDROUPOLIS AND ORMENION BRIEFLY TRANSITS TURKISH TERRITORY.) MEETING OF BORDER COMMISSION DESCRIBED AS "CORDIAL".

3) "MAKEDONIA" OF APRIL 15 REPORTS EXPLOSION OF "FIRECRACKER" OUTSIDE GREEK GRAMMAR SCHOOL IN KOMOTINI APRIL 12. WHILE NO INJURIES REPORTED,EXPLOSION DAMAGED WINDOWS OF SCHOOL AND NEIGHBORING BUILDINGS. POLICE NOW LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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INVESTIGATING INCIDENT WHICH OCCURS DURING PERIOD OF TENSION

RESULTING FROM DISPUTED MAYORAL ELECTION AND ALLEGED INTERFERENCE BY TURKISH CONSULATE GENERAL (REFS). WHILE RELEASE REFERS TO DEVICE AS "FIRECRACKER", REPORTED DAMAGES SUGGEST LARGER EXPLOSION.

4) THESSALONIKI PAPERS OF APRIL 12 REPORT SENTENCE BY LOCAL APPEALS COURT OF MOSLEM LAWYER HASAN AHMET IMAMOGLOU FROM KOMOTINI FOR "INSULTS AND THREATS" DURING JULY 1974 CYPRUS CRISIS. IMAMOGLOU WAS PREVIOUSLY SENTENCED BY KOMOTINI COURT TO THREE MONTHS IMPRISONMENT FOR ALLEGED THREATS AND ABUSE TO TWO COURT CLERKS. THESSALONIKI APPEALS COURT COMMUTED PUNISHMENT TO TWO MONTHS SUSPENDED SENTENCE. WHILE CASE APPARENTLY ROUTINE, CONSIDERABLE PUBLICITY GIVEN TO IMAMOGLOU BY ALL LOCAL PAPERS.

5) COMMENT: GOG HANDLING OF ALL INCIDENTS ABOVE APPEARS CONCILIATORY, I.E. BORDER COMMISSION MEETING DESCRIBED AS "CORDIAL", APPARENT BOMB EXPLOSION LISTED AS "FIRECRACKER", AND APPEALS COURT REDUCED SENTENCE OF MUSLIM LAWYER. PRESS ATTENTION TO INCIDENTS, NEVERTHELESS, REFLECTS CONTINUING SENSITIVITY HERE TO ISSUE OF MUSLIMS IN THRACE.
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